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COMPLETE WITHDRAWAL OF FOREIGN MILITARY FORCES FROM THE TERRITORIES OF THE BALTIC STATES

Report of the Secretary-General

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The withdrawal of the armed forces of the former USSR from Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania has been one of the major issues of concern to the Baltic States since the restoration of their independence in 1991. At their initiative, an item entitled "Complete withdrawal of foreign military forces from the territories of the Baltic States" was included in the agenda of the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly.

2. In its resolution 47/21 of 25 November 1992, the Assembly, inter alia, called upon all States concerned to conclude without delay appropriate agreements, including timetables, for the early, orderly and complete withdrawal of foreign military forces from the territories of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania; and urged the Secretary-General to use his good offices to facilitate the complete withdrawal of foreign military forces from the territories concerned. In August/September 1993, the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, Professor Tommy Koh, Ambassador-at-Large in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Singapore, led a good offices mission to the Russian Federation, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. The General Assembly was informed of the results and conclusions of his mission in the report of the Secretary-General to the Assembly at its forty-eighth session (A/48/501).

3. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 48/18 of 15 November 1993, in which the General Assembly urged the Secretary-General to use his good offices to facilitate the complete withdrawal of foreign military forces from the territories of Estonia and Latvia; and requested him to

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keep Member States informed of progress towards the implementation of the resolution and to report thereon to the Assembly at its forty-ninth session.

4. Pursuant to resolution 48/18, the Secretary-General followed closely the continuing negotiations between the three Baltic States and the Russian Federation. Mr. Marrack Goulding, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, held several rounds of consultations on the matter with all parties concerned and informed them of the readiness of the Secretary-General to make his good offices available to facilitate the completion of negotiations on issues related to the withdrawal of foreign military forces from Estonia and Latvia.

II. CURRENT SITUATION REGARDING COMPLETE WITHDRAWAL OF FOREIGN MILITARY FORCES FROM THE TERRITORIES OF THE BALTIC STATES

A. Lithuania

5. Russian troops withdrew from Lithuania on 31 August 1993. Those troops were relocated to the territory of the Russian Federation, including the Kaliningrad Oblast, an enclave bordering Lithuania and Poland. The issue of military transit by the Russian Federation through the territory of Lithuania to the Kaliningrad Oblast is still a subject of bilateral negotiations.

B. Latvia

6. At a summit meeting between President Boris N. Yeltsin of the Russian Federation and President Guntis Ulmanis of Latvia, held on 30 April 1994, a number of agreements relating to the withdrawal of troops were signed. The package included the Treaty on the Regulations, Time-Frame and Procedure for the Complete Withdrawal of Russian Troops and Their Legal Status During the Period of Withdrawal, the Agreement on Social Guarantees for Russian Military Personnel Residing in the Territory of Latvia Until Their Complete Withdrawal, the Agreement on Social Guarantees for Russian Federation Retired Military Personnel and Members of Their Families Living in the Territory of Latvia and its Additional Protocol, and the Agreement on the Legal Status of the Skrunda Radar Station During its Temporary Operation and Dismantlement.

7. In accordance with the Russian-Latvian agreements of 30 April 1994, the Russian Federation withdrew its troops before 31 August 1994. In return Latvia agreed to grant social benefits to the Russian retired military personnel and members of their families in Latvia. Both sides have also agreed to establish a special fund for the repatriation of those retirees who might wish to return to the Russian Federation.

Skrunda

8. Latvia has agreed to allow the Russian Federation to operate the anti-ballistic missile early-warning radar at Skrunda for four more years after the troop withdrawal, during which time Russia would build a similar

installation elsewhere. After that period, Russia would dismantle the Skrunda radar in 18 months. In a letter to the Secretary-General dated 27 July 1994 (see (A/49/344-S/1994/1008), the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations confirmed that the guarantees provided by the Russian Federation to Latvia in the Agreement on the Legal Status of the Skrunda Radar Station During its Temporary Operation and Dismantlement would not be used to carry out acts directed against the sovereignty or security interests of the Republic of Latvia.

C. Estonia

9. At a summit meeting on 26 July 1994, President Boris N. Yeltsin of the Russian Federation and President Lennart Meri of Estonia signed the Agreement on the Withdrawal of Armed Forces of the Russian Federation from the Territory of the Republic of Estonia and on Terms for Their Temporary Stationing in the Territory of the Republic of Estonia, and the Agreement on Social Guarantees for Russian Federation Retired Military Personnel in the Territory of the Republic of Estonia.

10. According to those agreements, the remaining Russian troops would withdraw from Estonia on 31 August 1994, while families of the military personnel would be able to remain in Estonia for up to a year after the troop withdrawal. The withdrawal of Russian troops was completed on schedule. Retired military personnel and members of their families receive, if they so request, permits to reside in Estonia; this excludes persons who, by decision of the Government of Estonia have for good reason been refused such permits, on the grounds that they pose a threat to the security of Estonia. An advisory commission to review the applications for residence permits submitted by Russian retired and demobilized military personnel has been established by the Government of Estonia. A representative of the Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) was invited to participate in the work of the commission and, in accordance with a decision of the CSCE Committee of Senior Officials of 16 September 1994, will do so.

Paldiski

11. According to the agreement on the procedure and terms of dismantling of the nuclear reactors, which was signed by Estonia and the Russian Federation on 30 July 1994, Russia will dismantle the nuclear reactors at Paldiski by 30 September 1995. During that period the Russian side will be responsible for nuclear safety and for the internal security of the installation, while the Estonian side will provide its external security. Both sides have agreed to provide necessary assistance for an international group of experts on nuclear safety during the implementation of the agreement. The Russian specialists will be granted residence permits for the period and members of their families will have the right to remain in Estonia until 15 May 1996.

III. OBSERVATIONS

12. The Secretary-General commends all the parties concerned for their success in resolving the problems related to the presence of foreign armed forces in the territory of the Baltic States. The constructive attitude, political will and spirit of compromise shown by the leaderships of Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and the Russian Federation have enabled this result to be achieved. The support of the international community has also been most important. The completion of Russian troop withdrawals from the territories of the Baltic States will enhance stability and will contribute to the development of good-neighbourly relations and cooperation in the region. The Secretary-General is confident that it will open a new page in relations between the Baltic States and the Russian Federation.

13. He also commends Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Denmark, Norway, the United States of America and other countries that have joined in a multinational effort to help the Russian Federation build the housing needed for troops and their families returning from the Baltic States.

14. However, there are still some points of concern. The representatives of both Estonia and Latvia have expressed their anxieties with regard to the fact that Russia allegedly demobilized a significant number of Russian officers in those countries in recent months, instead of withdrawing them to Russia. Estonia and Latvia do not consider those officers to be retirees and believe they should leave their territories as a part of a military contingent. Estonia and Latvia have also expressed concerns about the environmental damage caused by the deployment of Russian troops on their territories.

15. The Secretary-General remains ready to provide his good offices to facilitate, if necessary, the full implementation of the agreements reached by the parties, should they so wish.